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MINISTRY OF LAW

New Delhi, the 11th May, 1955

The following Acts of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 8th May, 1955 and are hereby published for general information:—

THE UNTOUCHABILITY (OFFENCES) ACT, 1955

No. 22 OF 1955

[8th May, 1955]

An Act to prescribe punishment for the practice of “Untouchability”, for the enforcement of any ‘disability arising therefrom and for matters connected therewith.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955. Short title,
extent and
commence-
ment.
- (2) It extends to the whole of India.
- (3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.
2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,— Definitions
 - (a) ‘hotel’ includes a refreshment room, a boarding house, a lodging house, a coffee house and a cafe;
 - (b) ‘place’ includes a house, a building, a tent, and a vessel;
 - (c) ‘place of public entertainment’ includes any place to which the public are admitted and in which an entertainment is provided or held.

Explanation.—‘Entertainment’ includes any exhibition, performance, game, sport and any other form of amusement;

(d) ‘place of public worship’ means a place, by whatever name known, which is used as a place of public religious worship or which is dedicated generally to, or is used generally by,

persons professing any religion or belonging to any religious denomination or any section thereof, for the performance of any religious service, or for offering prayers therein; and includes all lands and subsidiary shrines appurtenant or attached to any such place;

(e) 'shop' means any premises where goods are sold either wholesale or by retail or both wholesale and by retail and includes a laundry, a hair cutting saloon and any other place where services are rendered to customers.

Punishment
for enforcing
religious dis-
abilities.

3. Whoever on the ground of "untouchability" prevents any person—

(a) from entering any place of public worship which is open to other persons professing the same religion or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person; or

(b) from worshipping or offering prayers or performing any religious service in any place of public worship, or bathing in, or using the waters of, any sacred tank, well, spring or water-course, in the same manner and to the same extent as is permissible to other persons professing the same religion, or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person;

shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this section and section 4 persons professing the Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina religion or persons professing the Hindu religion in any of its forms or developments including Virashaivas, Lingayats, Adivasis, followers of Brahmo, Prarthana, Arya Samaj and the Swaminarayan Sampraday shall be deemed to be Hindus.

Punishment
for enforc-
ing social
disabilities.

4. Whoever on the ground of "untouchability" enforces against any person any disability with regard to—

(i) access to any shop, public restaurant, hotel or place of public entertainment; or

(ii) the use of any utensils, and other articles kept in any public restaurant, hotel, *dharmshala*, *sarai* or *musafirkhana* for the use of the general public or of persons professing the same religion, or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person; or

(iii) the practice of any profession or the carrying on of any occupation, trade or business; or

(iv) the use of, or access to, any river, stream, spring, well, tank, cistern, water-tap or other watering place, or any bathing ghat, burial or cremation ground, any sanitary convenience, any road, or passage, or any other place of public resort which other members of the public, or persons professing the same religion or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person, have a right to use or have access to; or

(v) the use of, or access to, any place used for a charitable or a public purpose maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public, or persons professing the same religion, or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person; or

(vi) the enjoyment of any benefit under a charitable trust created for the benefit of the general public or of persons professing the same religion or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person; or

(vii) the use of, or access to, any public conveyance; or

(viii) the construction, acquisition, or occupation of any residential premises in any locality, whatsoever; or

(ix) the use of any *dharmshala*, *sarai* or *musafirkhana* which is open to the general public, or to persons professing the same religion or belonging to the same religious denomination or any section thereof, as such person; or

(x) the observance of any social or religious custom, usage or ceremony or taking part in any religious procession; or

(xi) the use of jewellery and finery;

shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

5. Whoever on the ground of "untouchability"—

(a) refuses admission to any person to any hospital, dispensary, educational institution or any hostel attached thereto, if such hospital, dispensary, educational institution or hostel is established or maintained for the benefit of the general public or any section thereof; or

Punishment
for refusing
to admit persons to hospitals, etc.

(b) does any act which discriminates against any such person after admission to any of the aforesaid institutions;

shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Punishment
for refusing
to sell goods
or render
services.

6. Whoever on the ground of "untouchability" refuses to sell any goods or refuses to render any service to any person at the same time and place and on the same terms and conditions at or on which such goods are sold or services are rendered to other persons in the ordinary course of business shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Punishment
for other
offences arising out of
"untouchability".

7. (1) Whoever—

(a) prevents any person from exercising any right accruing to him by reason of the abolition of "untouchability" under article 17 of the Constitution; or

(b) molests, injures, annoys, obstructs or causes or attempts to cause obstruction to any person in the exercise of any such right or molests, injures, annoys or boycotts any person by reason of his having exercised any such right; or

(c) by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, incites or encourages any person or class of persons or the public generally to practise "untouchability" in any form whatsoever;

shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Explanation.—A person shall be deemed to boycott another person who—

(a) refuses to let to such other person or refuses to permit such other person to use or occupy any house or land or refuses to deal with, work for hire for, or do business with, such other person or to render to him or receive from him any customary service, or refuses to do any of the said things on the terms on which such things would be commonly done in the ordinary course of business; or

(b) abstains from such social, professional or business relations as he would ordinarily maintain with such other person.

(2) Whoever—

(i) denies to any person belonging to his community or any section thereof any right or privilege to which such person would be entitled as a member of such community or section, or

(ii) takes any part in the ex-communication of such person, on the ground that such person has refused to practise "untouchability" or that such person has done any act in furtherance of the objects of this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

8. When a person who is convicted of an offence under section 6 holds any licence under any law for the time being in force in respect of any profession, trade, calling or employment in relation to which the offence is committed, the court trying the offence may, without prejudice to any other penalty to which such person may be liable under that section, direct that the licence shall stand cancelled or be suspended for such period as the court may deem fit, and every order of the court so cancelling or suspending a licence shall have effect as if it had been passed by the authority competent to cancel or suspend the licence under any such law.

Cancellation or suspension of licences in certain cases.

Explanation.—In this section, 'licence' includes a permit or a permission.

9. Where the manager or trustee of a place of public worship which is in receipt of a grant of land or money from the Government is convicted of an offence under this Act and such conviction is not reversed or quashed in any appeal or revision, the Government may, if in its opinion the circumstances of the case warrant such a course, direct the suspension or resumption of the whole or any part of such grant.

Resumption or suspension of grants made by Government.

10. Whoever abets any offence under this Act shall be punishable with the punishment provided for the offence.

Abetment of offence.

11. Whoever having already been convicted of an offence under this Act or of an abetment of such offence is again convicted of any such offence or abetment, shall, on every such subsequent conviction, be punishable with both imprisonment and fine.

Enhanced penalty on subsequent conviction.

12. Where any act constituting an offence under this Act is committed in relation to a member of a Scheduled Caste as defined in clause (24) of article 366 of the Constitution, the court shall presume, unless the contrary is proved, that such act was committed on the ground of "untouchability".

Presumption by courts in certain cases.

13. (1) No civil court shall entertain or continue any suit or proceeding or shall pass any decree or order or execute wholly or partially any decree or order if the claim involved in such suit or proceeding or if the passing of such decree or order or if such

Limitation of jurisdiction of civil courts.

execution would in any way be contrary to the provisions of this Act.

(2) No court shall, in adjudicating any matter or executing any decree or order, recognise any custom or usage imposing any disability on any person on the ground of "untouchability".

Offences by
companies.

14. (1) If the person committing an offence under this Act is a company, every person who at the time the offence was committed was in charge of, and was responsible to, the company for the conduct of the business of the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly:

Provided that nothing contained in this sub-section shall render any such person liable to any punishment, if he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), where an offence under this Act has been committed with the consent of any director or manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall also be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this section.

(a) 'company' means any body corporate and includes a firm or other association of individuals; and

(b) 'director' in relation to a firm means a partner in the firm.

Offences
under the
Act to be
cognizable
and com-
poundable.

15. Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal V of 1898. Procedure, 1898—

(a) every offence under this Act shall be cognizable; and

(b) every such offence may, with the permission of the court, be compounded.

Act to over-
ride other
laws.

16. Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, the provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force, or any custom or usage or any instrument having effect by virtue of any such law or any decree or order of any court or other authority.

Repeal.

17. The enactments specified in the Schedule are hereby repealed to the extent to which they or any of the provisions contained therein correspond or are repugnant to this Act or to any of the provisions contained therein.

THE SCHEDULE

(See section 17)

1. The Bihar Harijan (Removal of Civil Disabilities) Act, 1949 (Bihar Act XIX of 1949).
2. The Bombay Harijan (Removal of Social Disabilities) Act, 1946 (Bombay Act X of 1947).
3. The Bombay Harijan Temple Entry Act, 1947 (Bombay Act XXXV of 1947).
4. The Central Provinces and Berar Scheduled Castes (Removal of Civil Disabilities) Act, 1947 (Central Provinces and Berar Act XXIV of 1947).
5. The Central Provinces and Berar Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1947 (Central Provinces and Berar Act XLI of 1947).
6. The East Punjab (Removal of Religious and Social Disabilities) Act, 1948 (East Punjab Act XVI of 1948).
7. The Madras Removal of Civil Disabilities Act, 1938 (Madras Act XXI of 1938).
8. The Orissa Removal of Civil Disabilities Act, 1946 (Orissa Act XI of 1946).
9. The Orissa Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1948 (Orissa Act XI of 1948).
10. The United Provinces Removal of Social Disabilities Act, 1947 (U.P. Act XIV of 1947).
11. The West Bengal Hindu Social Disabilities Removal Act, 1948 (West Bengal Act XXXVII of 1948).
12. The Hyderabad Harijan Temple Entry Regulation, 1358F (No. LV of 1358 Fasli).
13. The Hyderabad Harijan (Removal of Social Disabilities) Regulation, 1358F (No. LVI of 1358 Fasli).
14. The Madhya Bharat Harijan Ayogta Nivaran Vidhan, Samvat 2005 (Madhya Bharat Act No. 15 of 1949).
15. The Removal of Civil Disabilities Act, 1943 (Mysore Act XLII of 1943).
16. The Mysore Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1948 (Mysore Act XIV of 1948).
17. The Saurashtra Harijan (Removal of Social Disabilities) Ordinance (No. XL of 1948).
18. The Travancore-Cochin Removal of Social Disabilities Act, 1125 (Travancore-Cochin Act VIII of 1125).

19. The Travancore-Cochin Temple Entry (Removal of Disabilities) Act, 1950 (Travancore-Cochin Act XXVII of 1950).
20. The Coorg Scheduled Castes (Removal of Civil and Social Disabilities) Act, 1949 (Coorg Act I of 1949).
21. The Coorg Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1949 (Coorg Act II of 1949).

THE STATE BANK OF INDIA ACT, 1955

No. 23 OF 1955

[8th May, 1955]

An Act to constitute a State Bank for India, to transfer to it the undertaking of the Imperial Bank of India and to provide for other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS for the extension of banking facilities on a large scale, more particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas, and for divers other public purposes it is expedient to constitute a State Bank for India, and to transfer to it the undertaking of the Imperial Bank of India and to provide for other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

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| Short title and commencement. | 1. (1) This Act may be called the State Bank of India Act, 1955. |
| | (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint. |
| Definitions. | 2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,— |
| | (a) “appointed day” means the date on which this Act comes into force; |
| | (b) “Central Board” means the Central Board of Directors of the State Bank; |